

REMARKS

This responds to the Office Action mailed on November 27, 2006.

Claims 1, 9-10, 19, 21, 26, 32, 35-36 are amended, claims 11, 17-18, 25, 27-31, and 33-34 are canceled, without prejudice to the Applicant; as a result, claims 1-10, 12-16, 19-24, 26, 32, 35-37 are presenting pending in this application. The amendments were made at the suggestion and request of the Examiner to overcome informalities. Thus, entry of the amendments is appropriate.

Claim Objections

Claims 19-24, 26 and 32 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Claim 19 was slightly modified in response to the Examiner's 112 issue with the original independent claim 17 and now also includes the original limitations of claim 17 and claim 19 is written in independent form. Claims 20-24, 26, and 32 now dependent from new independent claim 19. Also, claim 32 was amended to overcome a 112 issue the Examiner identified. Consequently, Applicant believes that claims 19-24, 26, and 32 are now in condition for allowance as the Examiner indicated they would be if re-written to overcome the above stated objections and a few 112 issues discussed more completely below.

§112 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 1-33 and 35-37 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, for indefiniteness.

Claims 1, 19 (new independent from re-write of original claim 17), and 35 have been amended to now make clear that there is but one "secret value." Applicant believes confusion may have been present from the use of the original phrase "secrete value information;" this phrase is not longer present and the claims have other adjustments such that it is now unambiguous that there is but one single "secret value" that is being referred to in independent claims 1, 19, and 35. Thus, the 112 rejections are no longer appropriate and have been amended to correct the perceived ambiguity, as requested by the Examiner. Thus, Applicant believes claims 1, 19, and 35 are now in condition for allowance.

Claims 9-12, 31-33, and 36 were rejected under 112 because the Examiner indicated that the a hash function is invertible and the Examiner could not understand how it is that it could be otherwise. Applicant has amended the appropriate claims to demonstrate exactly how this can be. Discussion in the original specification provides the proper support for these amendments; as an example, the Examiner's attention is directed to the last paragraph on page 21 continuing through the first paragraph on page 22. Essentially, the members have access to the function and know the names of each of the other members and the shared secret value; thus, members can serially try input pairs for a name and the secret value to acquire a entity identifier, which can be compared to the entity identifier acquired by the member doing the checking. Similarly, a bitwise de-concatenation process may be used if a random number is present with the hash function. The specification details this process. Accordingly, Applicant believes this adequately addresses the Examiner's concern with these claims and the rejections should be withdrawn.

Original claim 17's limitations are now represented in new independent claim 19, since 17 was cancelled, without prejudice to the Applicant. The Examiner took issue with whether there was a single or multiple secrete values; Applicant has corrected this in new independent claim 19. Additionally, the Examiner was unsure how the entities acquired the secrete value; this too is now represented in new independent claim 19, where the secret value is agreed upon by the entities during their startup. Example support for this limitation may be found in the original filed specification in the first full paragraph of page 17.

Applicant believes each and every 112 issue has been addressed with the above amendments and thus each rejection is no longer appropriate and should be withdrawn. Applicant respectfully requests an indication of the same.

§102 Rejection of the Claims

Claims 17-18, 25, 27-31 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) for anticipation by Schneier (Applied Cryptography). Claims 17-18, 25, 27-31, and 33 have been cancelled without prejudice to the Applicant. Consequently, these rejections are now moot and no longer appropriate.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 19-24, 26 and 32 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant has made the appropriate amendments as identified and discussed above. Thus, Applicant believes that claims 19-24, 26, and 32 are now allowable as the Examiner indicated.

Claims 1-16 and 35-37 were indicated to be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, set forth in the Office Action. These claims have been amended in the manner required by the Examiner and as discussed above. Thus, Applicant believes that these claims are now allowable as well. Claim 11 was cancelled, without prejudice to the Applicant, above in response to the amendments made. So, Applicant believes that claims 1-10, 12-16, and 35-37 are now in condition for allowance as the Examiner indicated.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that the claims are in condition for allowance and notification to that effect is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to telephone Applicant's attorney (513) 942-0224 to facilitate prosecution of this application.

If necessary, please charge any additional fees or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 19-0743.

Reservation of Rights

In the interest of clarity and brevity, Applicant may not have addressed every assertion made in the Office Action. Applicant's silence regarding any such assertion does not constitute any admission or acquiescence. Applicant reserves all rights not exercised in connection with this response, such as the right to challenge or rebut any tacit or explicit characterization of any reference or of any of the present claims, the right to challenge or rebut any asserted factual or legal basis of any of the rejections, the right to swear behind any cited reference such as provided under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 or otherwise, or the right to assert co-ownership of any cited reference. Applicant does not admit that any of the cited references or any other references of record are relevant to the present claims, or that they constitute prior art. To the extent that any rejection or assertion is based upon the Examiner's personal knowledge, rather than any objective evidence of record as manifested by a cited prior art reference, Applicant timely objects to such reliance on Official Notice, and reserves all rights to request that the Examiner provide a reference or affidavit in support of such assertion, as required by MPEP § 2144.03. Applicant reserves all rights to pursue any cancelled claims in a subsequent patent application claiming the benefit of priority of the present patent application, and to request rejoinder of any withdrawn claim, as required by MPEP § 821.04.

AMENDMENT AND RESPONSE UNDER 37 CFR § 1.116 – EXPEDITED PROCEDURE

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Respectfully submitted,

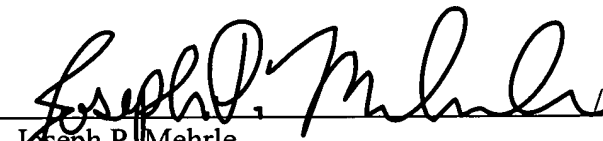
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Date January 29, 2007

By /


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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 CFR 1.8: The undersigned hereby certifies that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail, in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop AF, Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on this 29 day of January 2007.


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